

## Utopia a Democratic State.

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punishments! " For what other thing do you than make thieves and then punish them?"

Utopia is, of course, a democratic State. Slavery is not unknown among its inhabitants, but there is no servile class, no large mass incapable of political rights. More's idea of the people is remarkably large, and has outstepped the limits of mediaeval and ancient times. The bondmen are those who lose their freedom for heinous offences, or have been condemned to death in foreign lands and bought off by the Utopians. They are thus confined to the criminal class. Only the criminal who has forfeited them by his lawlessness has no social or political rights. In this Utopian democracy the prince holds his office by election, and may forfeit it by reason of tyranny. He is assisted by a number of councillors, who choose him from a list selected by the people. Local affairs are managed by local magistrates, who also owe their office to election by each thirty families. Conspiracy against the commonwealth is punished by death, and, in order to obviate it, no consultation is permissible outside the council chamber or the place of common election. Every weighty question is referred to the people by the local magistrate, and public spirit is nurtured by means of this confidence, which maintains interest in the commonweal. More is shrewd enough to foresee that the best ruled State is that in which an enlightened public opinion flourishes. But popular legislation does not mean hasty legislation. No measure can be passed in a hurry; it must be subjected to exhaustive debate. Evidently, the system of packing parliaments and intriguing for selfish interests, at the expense of the general welfare, is capable of amendment in the eyes of our democratic philosopher.

More's religion, as reflected in Utopia, is that of an enlightened and tolerant man who has emancipated himself from the theological narrowness of the age to an extraordinary degree. In him the humane tone of the Renaissance reaches a very high place. There is variety of religion in Utopia, or rather of religious forms, for all are agreed as to the nature of God as a sovereign being, though they worship Him variously. They show great eagerness to adopt Christianity, yet they dislike hot-headed proselytism, and condemn to exile the